Newspapers.com by Ancestry
https://www.newspapers.com/image/422245032



# ENTERTAINMENT

INSIDE:
PEOPLE — COMICS

The Gazette
MONTREAL, MONDAY, JUNE 18, 1979
PAGES 43 TO 56

110 STORES
Complexe Desjardins
Metro Place des Arts

# Yes, Yes, Nanette

## Didn't know a word of French when she came here from Mississippi Nanette Workman's now our disco queen

By JUAN RODRIGUEZ
of The Gazette

Can a Mississippi delta queen find happiness living in Montreal?

When your name is Nanette Workman and you have played on the major pop and rock music stages of the world, the answer is a definite yes. And when you're Nanette, you become Quebec's queen of disco and a driving force behind a Montreal recording session scene.

"I've checked out places like New York, London, Los Angeles, Paris, because I worked and lived there," she says in a southern drawl flecked with parched tones. "And I can honestly say I prefer Montreal."

Over the weekend, back from two months of sold-out performances in the Paris rock-opera *Starmania*, the 31-year-old singer launched a new band with another leading local music figure — her brother Billy. The group, Dual Exhaust, made its debut opening for Murray Head at Salle Wilfrid Pelletier.

"I've always wanted to perform with Billy," she says, "but I've always been too busy. But now is a very good time for both of us."

It's taken them a long time to get there — a winding, sometimes interconnected route that has seen them singing and playing with a variety of people.

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y. of showbusiness parents (father played in the Tommy Dorsey Band and mother was in the theatre), Nanette moved to Jackson, Miss., at the age of six.

Nanette — "yeah, it's my real name" — appeared on her mother's local television show and later was a regular on numerous teen-type shows. After dropping out of the University of Southern Mississippi, and failing a scholarship for the Julliard Conservatory, she moved back to New York and started knocking on doors. Eventually, she landed a role as understudy of the leading lady in *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying* and found herself on stage for nearly two years.

The storybook tale takes a unique twist with the arrival of Montreal pop music alchemist Tony Roman, who was hanging out, picking up tricks, with New York producers 'Shadow' Morton and Bob Crewe. Roman convinced Nanette to come to Montreal and record in French.

"I didn't hardly speak a word of French when we recorded *Et maintenant*. In fact, I didn't even know they spoke it up here. It took me a year to understand it and another year to speak it."

By 1968, she was off to England to try her luck. "I was in a trio with Doris Troy (*Just One Look*) and Madelaine Bell, just doing sessions, when we were hired by the Rolling Stones for their *Let It Bleed* album. Mick Jagger seemed to like my voice, so I got to sing harmony on *Honky Tonk Women*.

That led to sessions on ex-Beatle George Harrison's epic *All Things Must Pass* and with such stars as Elton John, Peter Frampton and Gary Wright. She was also the regular singer on a top-rated British television series by comics Peter Cook and Dudley Moore.

Visa problems pushed her to France to perform on Johnny Halliday's world tour — and the lure of Montreal in the shape of local producer Angelo Finaldi, who convinced her to do a French version of Labelle's *Lady Marmelade*. It was a monster success that even received play in American discotheques and was followed by a long string of disco hits — *Danser, Danser; Donne, Donne* — that have become standards on virtually every jukebox in the province.

Her voice has also been heard on numerous records produced locally, by Tony Roman, Boule Noire, Michel Pagliaro, Walter Rossi, Mahogany Rush, disco king Gino Soccio, the Bombers, Jimmy Zeller and others.

"I don't really call them sessions anymore," she says emphatically. "I'm in the position now where I don't want to do any singing unless it's fun."

The fun in the Place des Arts rehearsal hall began with a nip of Scotch ("to warm up the pipes") for the slinky singer, whose long limp black hair matched her T-shirt and jeans, contrasting with her parchment skin and crimson nails.

"Are they used to loud music at Place des Arts?" she asked. "Because that's what we're gonna play, straight-ahead rock."

Nanette added that she's only including a medley of her French disco hits because she wants to concentrate on an English career.

In walked her brother Billy, his long wavy hair parted in the middle, dressed in faded jean jacket style. At 25 he is one of the city's leading guitarists, playing for years with Quebec rock king Pagliaro and author of his own album.

"I came here for Expo '67 when I was 13," he said, "and three years later I was playing for a living here. I think that playing with Pagliaro taught me the most. He's the kind of guy who likes to spend practically *all* his waking hours in the studio, and it was a great opportunity for me."

Later at the Place des Arts appearance, the Workmans roared into a hard soul-styled rock sound. Nanette, dressed in tight satin pants and a red blouse, seemed totally at ease belting out her songs. Billy struck forth commanding guitar solos.

It seems like the right time for Dual Exhaust.

She's been everywhere, but Nanette likes Montreal best

# Staginess puts class in pop act

MURRAY HEAD
Surprisingly haunting

By JUAN RODRIGUEZ
of The Gazette

Theatre-rock — that curious genre of music pioneered by the likes of Genesis, Peter Gabriel and Jethro Tull — has often been a stomping grounds for singers who amateurishly and unsubtly strain with body gestures to attain a "dramatic" effect.

Murray Head, who performed at Salle Wilfrid Pelletier on Friday and Saturday nights, goes about it the other way 'round. He's originally an actor by trade — having appeared in many British and European films (*Sunday Bloody Sunday* being the most notable) — who has brought his stagy craft to the pop song medium.

Like most of his contemporaries, he glorifies personal reveries, but at least he does it with flair. His voice may not be the greatest, but there's no denying his stage presence. His brand of pop may not quite escape the banal, yet it's surprisingly haunting.

Judging from the rapturous response the two sell-out crowds accorded him, Montreal rock fans seem to be leading the universe in recognizing his talent. That's no surprise, as the entire theatre-rock music scene has always been close to the hearts of the city's francophone rock cognoscenti.

Aided by a variety of thoughtful stage props and lighting schemes, Head saved his big hit, *Say It Ain't So, Joe*, for the end, leading up to it with equally moody numbers from his new album, such as *Mademoiselle*, *Los Angeles*, and *It's So Hard*.

Head's determination to carve a niche in rock was reflected by a crack band of hand-picked British sidemen, who whipped up the melodrama that Head's voice could only hint at.

Whether Head has the stuff to make it onto the arena concert circuit — where the major record sales are generated — remains to be seen. But in a real theatre like Place des Arts, he created an unusually intimate atmosphere.

# Live theatre is Rock Hudson's newest love

ROCK HUDSON
Not much of a dancer

NEW YORK — (AP) — "I don't know whether it's like a child with a new toy or not, but I really love to do live theatre."

Rock Hudson is doing what he loves, through November, in *On the 20th Century*, his first national tour.

There was a time when he wanted to do only movies. But "I got spoiled by doing some live theatre. Live is a lot more fun. It is all concentrated in two-and-a-half hours.

"In films, there's a lot of waiting around. I usually spent my waiting time checking over lines. You don't get a rehearsal period before a film starts shooting, so you're never as sure of your lines as you are in theatre, where you rehearse five weeks before you open."

Imogene Coca and Judy Kaye of the Broadway cast of *On the 20th Century* are on the national tour, which opened in Detroit June 9. Hudson replaces John Cullum.

The tour is scheduled for Chicago in August and six weeks each in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Before the show took to the road, Hudson worked up a sweat practising time steps the length of a rehearsal studio. "I'm not a dancer," he said. "I feel like a klutz. I never took dancing lessons. I was under contract 18 years to a studio that didn't make musicals.

Hudson hasn't done much singing, either. One reason he took this show, he says, is that it stretches his abilities.

"Everybody thinks I sang duets with Doris Day, but I didn't," he says.

He visited a vocal coach every morning and did breathing exercises to prepare for the tour.

Hudson's first live theatre was in Los Angeles in 1974 where he co-starred with Carol Burnett in *I Do, I Do*. It was his first attempt at singing and his first attack of stage fright.

Burnett, a personal friend, phoned Hudson and asked if he'd like to be in the two-character play with her. "I told her I'd never been on stage. She said she knew that.

"Then I told her I'd seen the play and hadn't liked it. She sent me the script and it was three laughs a page. I called her and said I didn't remember it being funny. She said she tought it was funny, too, so we did it."

His stage fright came on opening night of four performances in San Bernardino. The curtain went up for his opening song. "There was this black abyss. I thought, 'I'm going to die.' Luckily there was applause and I had time to swallow. From then on I was at home. I'm pleased to say, since then, I can't wait for the curtain to go up."

The next year, Hudson and Burnett played *I Do, I Do* in Dallas, Washington and St. Louis. in 1976, he and Juliet Prouse did it in London and he also toured in John Brown's Body. In 1977 he was in *Camelot* and last year he played a mini-series, *Martian chronicles*.

Hudson grew a moustache for *On the 20th Century* but there was discussion about whether he should keep it. It fits the 1930s character he plays, but it changes the look of the Rock Hudson some patrons may be buying tickets to see. He's had a moustache only twice before — in a western and in the first of six seasons he starred in *MacMillan and Wife*, a television series.

There also was talk of bleaching a strip through Hudson's salt-and-pepper hair. "I play a very dramatic egomaniac, so if it didn't look natural it wouldn't matter. He probably had it put in in a barbershop, anyway. It's kind of fun to play this kind of man, especially for an introvert like me."

Rock Hudson is now the legal name of Rock Hudson.

"Silly, isn't it? My agent I had when I was starting out gave me that name. What is wrong with Roy Fitzgerald? That was my argument then, too.

"Everybody how knows me calls me Roy. Now my last name is Hudson. It still doesn't feel right.

"I changed it just a few months ago because it gets confusing. On legal documents, most of the time I had to sign two names, in between them putting 'professionally known as.'"

## *French film investors to get break*

Private investors in French-language films will get a break from the federal government funding agency because of their smaller market, says the Canadian Film Development Corp.

Corporation president Michel Vennat said on the weekend that francophone film producers have difficulty finding investors because there is a much smaller market for French film than for English ones.

"They don't have the revenues from pay television in the United States or the option of selling to the American networks," he told an annual conference of Quebec film producers.

Starting immediately, private investors in French-language films that the corporation has invested in will be allowed to recoup their investments first to compensate for the extra risks they are taking.

"If an individual puts $3,000 into a francophone film, then he will be allowed the first $3,000 that film makes," Vennat said.

Normally revenue is divided equally among investors, whether private or government.

Last year the federal corporation invested $7.8 million in films with a total budget of $50 million.

*The Canadian Press*

# 'Shampoo' plagiarized says California jury

LOS ANGELES — (AP) — A Superior Court jury has awarded $185,000 to a little-known writer who said that actor Warren Beatty and screenwriter Robert Towne stole her ideas to create the Oscar-winning 1975 movie *Shampoo*.

The 9-to-3 decision Friday upheld accusations by Bernice Mann of West Los Angeles that Beatty and Towne plagiarized a script she wrote called *Women Plus*. Columbia Pictures was also named in the suit.

Beatty starred in the film and collaborated with Towne on the script. Actress Lee Grant won an Oscar as best supporting actress in the movie which dealt with the sexual exploits of a male hairdresser in Hollywood and Beverly Hills.

Mann, a manicurist who quit her job after developing Parkinson's disease, based *Women Plus* on her experiences in beauty salons. She submitted the work, which had been registered with the Writer's Guild, to Columbia, but says it was never returned.

Her lawyer, Lee Landrum, noted similarities between the main character in Shampoo and the central male figure in *Women Plus*. Other characters also were similar, he said.

Beatty and Towne denied at the trial that they were guilty of plagiarism.

Towne, who won an Academy Award for the script *China Town*, testified that *Shampoo* was the "most personal screenplay I ever worked on."

Joel Lawler, a lawyer for Towne and Beatty, argued that the two scripts contained only general similarities and that Mann's ideas were not unique.

The defendants denied having seen Mann's script until the suit was filed and defence lawyers said Columbia had no record of receiving the script.

# *Hope hits 'The Road to China' for TV*

PEKING — (UPI) — Bob Hope made a smashing debut in China yesterday with his golf club, clowning and camera.

Trailed by aides on his first day of sightseeing in Peking, the 76-year-old comedian visited "Democracy Wall," where citizens of the Chinese capital paste up home-made posters voicing complaints or thoughts.

While a crowd of curious Chinese watched, Hope practised pasting up his own poster — advertising *The Road to China*, the three-hour television spectacular he will be filming during his 27 days in China.

On nearby Tienanmen Square, Hope drew crowds when his aides started taking pictures of him with a baby in white sunglasses, a group of Chinese tourists and an old man with a long beard.

His aides handed out the instant photographs to the Chinese, who were fascinated even though they had no idea who Bob Hope was.

Hope arrived on Saturday at Peking airport and quipped, "I want to meet 900 million fans who don't know me."

The veteran entertainer, whose films have never been shown in China, went unrecognized by the Chinese at the airport. But a dozen startled American tourists spotted his famous profile, and a half-dozen Western journalists and officials from China's ministry of culture were on hand to greet him.

A ministry of culture official welcoming Hope said, "The fact that you traveled for such a distance at your age is a sign of friendship for the Chinese people."

Hope laughed and said, "I'd like to know how you found out about my advanced age."

Hope's production will be the first of its kind to be made in China by a foreign company.

Hope said he has been trying to come to China to make a show since 1973 and had asked former U.S. secretary of state Henry Kissinger to help him.

The local residents may get a dose of culture shock if they glimpse some of the All-American acts Hope has brought along for the show: Disco duo Peaches and Herb, country singer Crystal Gayle and a troupe of chorus girls.

The show will also feature some Chinese talent, including members of the famed Peking Opera, a seven-foot-two-inch basketball centre named Mu Te-tzu, some of the country's top dancers, comics and acrobats and a nine-year-old girl table tennis star who will thrash Hope in a ping-pong game.

Yesterday, at the Forbidden City, a complex of 16th and 17th Century palaces, Hope with his golf club tried putting a bronze ball beneath the foot of a gigantic bronze lion.

The gilt sedan chairs that once carried emperors brought the crack, "They have only had those since the gasoline shortage."

BOB HOPE
Filming 3-hour special

## *Garfunkel's girl overdose victim*

NEW YORK — (AP) — Laureen Bird, who lived in a penthouse apartment with singer Art Garfunkel, killed herself with a drug overdose, police say. The woman's father says she was upset because Garfunkel would not marry her.

Bird, 26, was found dead Friday by building superintendent Ambrose Craig. Garfunkel was reported to be performing abroad and could not be reached for comment.

Copyright © 2024 Newspapers.com. All Rights Reserved.
Powered by Newspapers.com